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ABSTRACT

The College of Education at Chicago State University provides assistance to two- and four-year college faculty in instructional techniques, strategies, and refinement of skills in course content development and teaching methods. The program has two components: organizational analysis and process analysis. In organizational analysis, faculty are assisted in the development of course content, syllabi, objectives, and sub-goals for each class session during the term. A private conference is arranged with the instructor to review the organization of each of these aspects of a course. Process analysis involves videotaping the instructor in the classroom and providing a private, confidential critique of the taped session with regard to clarity of communication, teaching aids used, student participation, and student-teacher interaction. The program staff member is selected through mutual agreement between the dean of the college of education and/or the coordinator of faculty development, and the instructor requesting assistance. Preservation of privacy and confidentiality is of prime importance in program implementation. Faculty requesting assistance may choose to participate in either or both program components. (Author/MSE)

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Chicago State University
Instructional Technique - Strategy Assistance (ITSA) Model
Initiated September, 1982

Sponsored By

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- o To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- o To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- o To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- o To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

Abstract

Instructional Technique - Strategy Assistance (ITSA) College of Education - Faculty Development Chicago State University

The College of Education at Chicago State University provides Instructional Technique - Strategy Assistance (ITSA) for faculty of four year and two year institutions of higher learning who are motivated to improve their teaching effectiveness. ITSA provides assistance to faculty in instructional techniques, strategies, and the refinement of skills in course content development and teaching methods.

The ITSA program is twofold: one, to provide organizational analysis and two, to provide process analysis.

Organizational Analysis involves assisting faculty in the development of course content, course syllabi, course objectives and subgoals with regard to each class session during the term. A private conference is arranged with the instructor to review the organization of each of the above aspects of a given course.

Process Analysis involves video-taping the instructor in the classroom and providing a private, confidential critique of the video-taped session with regard to clarity of communication, teaching aides utilized, student participation and student - instructor interaction. The ITSA assistant is selected through mutual agreement between the Dean of the College of Education and/or the Coordinator of Faculty Development and the instructor requesting assistance. The preservation of privacy and confidentiality is of prime importance in the implementation of ITSA. Faculty requesting assistance may choose to participate in either organizational analysis, process analysis or both.

Instructional Technique-Strategy Assistance has been planned by Dr. Barbara Kardas, Dean of the College of Education with the support of the Chicago State University Faculty Development Committee. Arrangements for ITSA can be made by calling Pat Atherton, Coordinator for Chicago State University Faculty Development at 995-2390.

The Instructional Technique - Strategy Assistance (ITSA) program was developed in 1982 by the College of Education to assist faculty from disciplines outside the field of Education in the improvement of instructional skills. This program is administered through the university Faculty Development program with the support of the Office of Academic Affairs. The need for ITSA is founded in the premise that while all faculty are assumed to possess expertise in a given discipline, their educational background, in most instances, does not include didactic educational training. Having knowledge is often not commensurate with the ability to impart that knowledge in understandable terms. Implementation of the program calls for utilizing senior faculty mentors in the College of Education to work with faculty requesting assistance. The request for assistance is made to the Faculty Development Coordinator who then makes a list of senior faculty mentors available from which a particular mentor is chosen. From this point on the senior faculty mentor and the novice faculty confer to determine the needs or areas of concern to be addressed. Confidentiality between the senior faculty mentor and the novice faculty is critical in continued effectiveness of this program. Those requesting assistance are assured that their request for assistance is not a reflection of their professional competence, and will not negatively impact their status in the process required for retention, tenure or promotion consideration. The senior faculty mentor presents two options for examining instructional skills:

organizational analysis and process analysis.

Organizational analysis involves assisting faculty in the development of course content outlines, course syllabi, course objectives and subgoals for each class session during the term. The comprehensive nature of each task is approached with consideration of the character of the student population at Chicago State University. Logically sequenced organization of each task serves to impose a clear structure for both the instructor and the students. The clearly established structure is pointed out throughout the organization of lectures, the syllabus, the course assignment examinations and the evaluation process.

Process Analysis addresses the quality of the teaching process. The novice faculty is video taped while teaching to assess voice projection; clarity of communication; student - instructor interaction or rapport; the level of cognitive questions and answers; possible distracting behavioral mannerisms; and the overall milieu created in the classroom. The video tape is viewed privately by the instructor or with the senior faculty mentor depending upon the instructor's comfort level. The instructor requesting assistance may choose to participate in either organizational analysis, process analysis or both. The conclusions drawn from both analyses are synthesized in the final instructor - mentor conference. The senior faculty mentor continues to be available to the novice instructor whenever further need for assistance is apparent.

An added value of the mentor - instructor relationship is in providing an opportunity for newly hired faculty members to be informed of university policies and procedures pertaining to academic responsibilities as members of the department, college and the university community.

The impact of ITSA can not easily be measured in statistical terms. The act of requesting assistance places faculty in a vulnerable position and hence, requires a degree of emotional security on the part of the novice instructor and complete confidentiality on the part of the senior faculty mentor. This process of developing appropriate teaching skills along with the on-going faculty development programs focused on teaching strategies are viewed as complementary. Feedback from faculty who have participated in ITSA has been informal but very positive. The value of this model might be greater realized if it was established as a policy for all newly employed faculty during the first year of teaching at the university in view of the fact that teaching is the first priority for faculty employed at urban commuter campuses with similar student populations. This model also serves to sensitize faculty to the verbal and non-verbal communication instrumental in motivating first generation college bound students by equating the value of curriculum oriented instruction with that of student oriented instruction. Faculty in this setting need to possess expertise in a particular discipline and to possess communication skills which personalize the instruction to student needs.

The implementation of the Instructional Technique - Strategy Assistance (ITSA) program has not required budget consideration. However, expanding this model to serve all incoming faculty might call for released/reassigned time for senior faculty mentors.